

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claim will replace all prior versions, and listings, of the claim in the application.

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A method of providing a client-side local assistant program from an agent's computer system to a customer's computer system, the method comprising:

providing an agent Web site that presents a local assistant program download offer for viewing on the customer's computer system;

in response to selection by the customer's computer of a download link for the local assistant program download offer, invoking a server-side local assistant administrative system installed on the agent's computer system such that the local assistant administrative system transmits a local assistant installation agreement to the customer's computer system;

in response to receipt by the agent's computer system of an accepted local assistant installation agreement from the customer's computer system, installing a client-side local assistant program that does not require a web browser program and remains active by processing data on the customer's computer system until disabled or uninstalled regardless of the status of the web browser program or a connection between the customer's computer system and a server;
and

in response to receipt by the agent's computer system of a request from the customer's computer system for a predefined ruleset and information database associated with the local

assistant program, installing the predefined ruleset and information database on the customer's computer system;

wherein the local assistant program modifies the ruleset by adding new rules or updating the ruleset while the local assistant program runs on the customer's computer system ~~while the operation of the local assistant program is modified by adding new rules to the ruleset.~~

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1, wherein the local assistant program includes functionality that allows the customer's computer system to observe, analyze, and/or store information regarding a computer-mediated customer interaction with the web browser program and other computer programs.

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): The method as in claim 2, and wherein the computer-mediated customer interaction comprises viewing a web page.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The method as in claim 2, and wherein the computer-mediated customer interaction comprises playing music through a computer program that is independent of the web browser program.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The method as in claim 1, and wherein the local assistant program includes functionality that allows the customer's computer system to define periodic scheduled tasks to be performed by the customer's computer system, whether or not the user is interacting with the customer's computer.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): -The method as in claim 5, and wherein the periodic tasks include gathering, analyzing and/or displaying information regarding predefined topics of interest; wherein the information displayed is retrieved by the client-side local assistant program from multiple web sources.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The method as in claim 1, and wherein the local assistant program includes functionality that allows direct interaction between the local assistant program and the customer.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended) A computer-based system, installed on an agent's computer system, that provides for presentation of selection information on a customer's computer system, the computer-based system comprising:

a client-side local assistant program that, upon request by a customer, is downloadable from the agent's computer system to the customer's computer system and operates independently of a web browser program and remains active on the customer's computer system until disabled or uninstalled regardless of the status of the web browser program or a connection between the customer's computer system and a server; and

a server-side local assistant administrative system that, subsequent to download of the local assistant program to the customer's computer system, provides for access by the customer's computer system to at least one predefined ruleset and an associated information database relating to the selected information;

wherein the local assistant program modifies the ruleset by adding new rules or updating the ruleset while the local assistant program runs on the customer's computer system ~~while the operation of the local assistant program is modified by adding new rules to the ruleset.~~

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): The computer-based system as in claim 8, and wherein the predefined ruleset and associate information database is downloadable from the agent's computer system to the customer's computer system.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): The computer-based system as in claim 9, and wherein the server-side local assistant administrative system includes a merchant database that stores information relating to multiple assisted merchants.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): The computer-based system as in claim 10, and wherein, subsequent to download of the predefined ruleset and associated information database to the customer's computer system, selected portions of the merchant database are downloadable to the customer's computer system in accordance with rules included in the predefined ruleset.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): The computer-based system as in claim 8 and wherein the local assistant program includes functionality for specifying and/or interpreting rulesets for observing, analyzing and/or storing information regarding computer-mediated customer interactions.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): The computer-based system as in claim 8, and wherein the local assistant program includes functionality for defining periodic tasks to be performed by the customer's computer system.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): The computer-based system as in claim 8, and wherein the local assistant program includes functionality for direct interaction between the local assistant system and the local assistant administrative system.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): The computer-based system as in claim 8, and wherein the local assistant program includes a rules interpreter that retrieves and analyzes web documents from multiple merchants or multiple information providers related to the selected information.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The computer-based system as in claim 8, and wherein the local assistant program includes a rules interpreter that creates and displays interactive windows related to the selected information.

Claim 17 (Currently Amended): The computer-based system as in claim 8, and wherein the local assistant program includes a rules interpreter system that reads and writes local interaction data related to the selected information ~~for storage~~ on a local interaction database on the customer's computer system.

Claim 18 (Currently Amended): The computer-based system as in claim 8, and wherein the local assistant program includes a rules interpreter system that transmits requests to the server-side local assistant administrative system for ruleset updates, receives the rule updates and stores the rule updates on a rules database on the customer's computer system.

Claim 19 (Currently Amended): The computer-based system as in claim 8, and wherein the local assistant program includes a rules interpreter system that transmits requests to ~~to~~ for updated interaction data relating to the selected information, receives the updated interaction data and stores the updated interaction data on a local interaction database on the customer's computer system ~~in the local assistant administrative system.~~

Claim 20 (Previously Presented): The computer-based system as in claim 8, and wherein the local assistant program includes a rules interpreter system that allows the customer's computer system to interact directly with the local assistant system via browser navigation to a local reserved URL.

Claim 21 (Previously Presented): The computer-based system as in claim 20, and wherein the rules interpreter system includes functionality for parsing the local reserved URL to determine requested action and data to be determined by the customer's computer system.